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Denis Dyomkin
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Back in 1990, I was a 19-year-old journalism student in Vladivostok - a fortress city, headquarters of the Soviet Pacific Fleet, so tightly controlled it was closed even to most Soviet citizens. But that year, it opened: first to CNN (see Heidi Kuhn's report), then to NATO (read below).

A year before, the Berlin Wall collapsed. The cracks spread further, heard all the way to the Soviet Pacific coast when Canadian warships - HMCS Huron, Kootenay, and Annapolis - sailed into Golden Horn Bay on a typically sweltering June day. It was the first port call by a non-communist navy since 1937. The Cold War has ended.

The goodwill visit “contributed significantly to Canadian prestige throughout the region,” a military historian later wrote. Can attest: it resonated especially deeply among my (then) young, Perestroika generation.

(What a grim historical irony that the unofficial anthem of that hopeful era, "Go West," would become an emergency exit sign for so many of us decades later.)

The photos I’m sharing capture the five days Canadians spent there, strolling the streets and being welcomed. They were relaxed and smiling, nothing like the Cold War propaganda caricatures. Their crisp uniforms looked tailor-made - and we were fascinated by their uniform sweaters. We joked they must have been knitted by Entente Grandma, a nod to an old cliché about the failed Allied intervention against the Bolsheviks. (That uniform was adopted in the mid-1980s to distinguish the Canadian Navy from the British.)

The city buzzed. Foreigners, up close, were a spectacle; female officers (unimaginable!) Vladivostok is a major port; some merchant seamen spoke English and smuggled in US jeans, Sony stereos, chewing gum, even second-hand Japanese cars. But for most of us,

myself included, communication was gestures, curious stares - and a new feeling of the future arriving.

Thousands lined up to tour the ships and glimpse a world we'd only seen on TV. We didn't know how to open a can of Coke. Photocopiers blew our minds. A microwave felt like science fiction. Peter Goodspeed of the Toronto Star, who travelled aboard Huron, put these details in his front-page story on the seismic Royal Canadian Navy | Marine royale canadienne USSR foray.

The stores in Vladivostok were empty - long lines, shortages of basic items. But, oddly, there were high-quality technical drawing tools snapped up by Canadians for pennies. In a command economy, prices bore no relation to global markets. (Before Gorby's reforms, buying foreign currency could mean severe punishment, even execution.)

Among the Canadian naval officers was Tim H. Addison, CD, then a HMCS Huron lieutenant commander. Decades later, he wrote: "I knew I was witnessing history in the making." To say it's a pity that history slid back to square one would be an understatement.

Photographer unknown - glad to provide credit.

hashtag
#RCNavy
hashtag
#ColdWarHistory
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#CanadaDay

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Personal/Not GC's

Most recent

Sabina Zawadzki · 1st
Media consultant | ex-Reuters | Editor | Due diligence

4d

Denis really enjoying these. Front seat to history. And as someone who still remembers her brief childhood in Poland in the 80s, the looks, sounds, feelings are an echo of familiarity.

Love · 1 | Reply

Denis Dyomkin Author
GC. Ex-Reuters

(edited) 6d

HMCS Kootenay, part of that 1990 Vladivostok goodwill visit, was commanded by Glenn V. Davidson - future Vice-Admiral and, decades later, Canada's top diplomat in two war-torn capitals: ambassador to Syria and then to Afghanistan. Some careers follow extraordinary arcs - and the world is small... Maclean's magazine: https://macleans.ca/news/world/the-interview-glenn-davidson-canadas-last-ambassador-to-syria/

The Interview: Glenn Davidson, Canada's last envoy to Syria
Former ambassador Glenn Davidson on leaving Syria, the civil war, the current peace talks—and what Canada needs to do

Like · 1 | Reply | 215 impressions

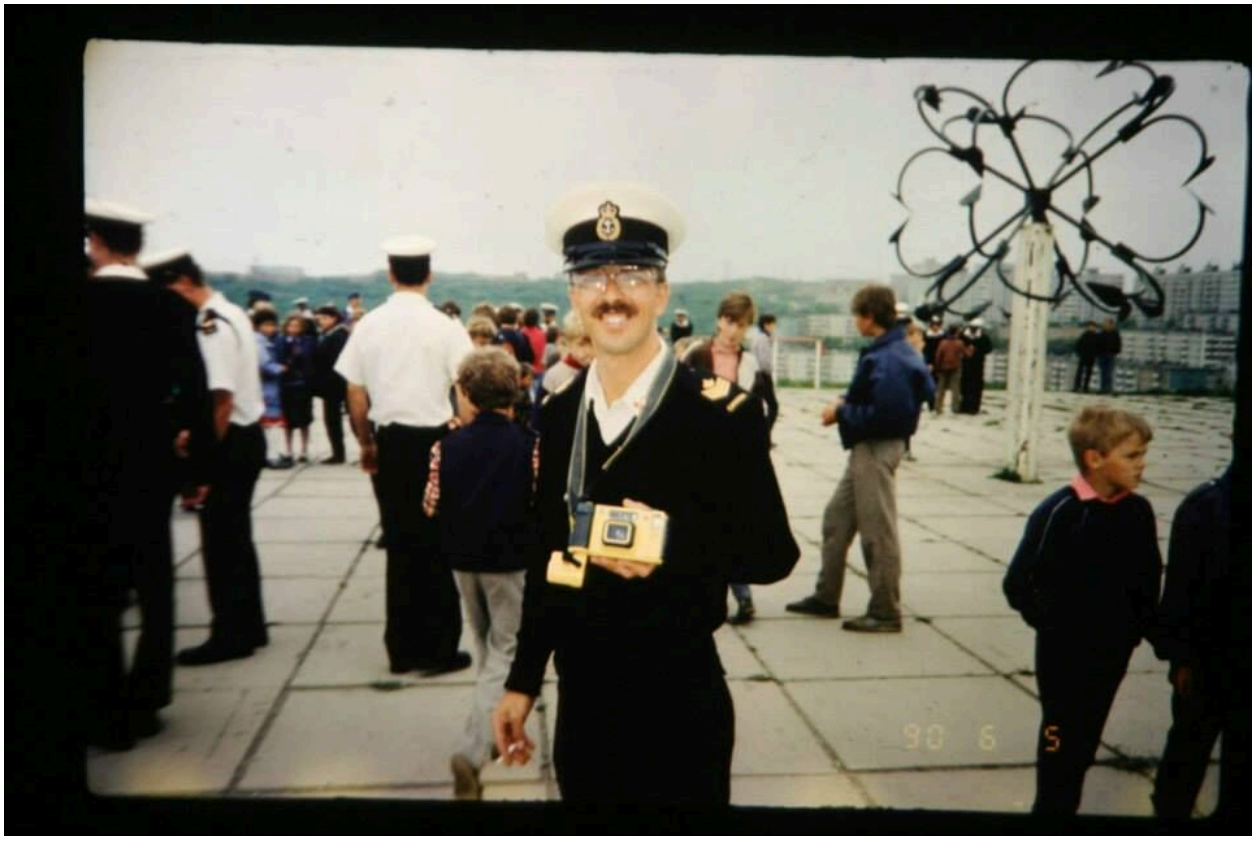
Tim H. Addison, CD · 1st
Canadian Defence Industry Business Development Executive

2w

Denis Dyomkin what a pleasure to read your comments and see those photos. Such fond memories of a time of great hope for a new world order and it did appear to be history in the making. 35 years later I fear we are on the brink of a total melt down. So sad.

Love · 4 | Reply

CNN
1:35 / 2:31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SOUNDINGS

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First objective in Ottawa Branch Bylaws
"Make all levels of Government and the general public clearly aware of the vital need for, and value of adequate and effective Maritime defence forces to protect and further the interests of Canada."

54.01 "Trying the depth of the water and the quality of the bottom line…." May 2018

In 1990 in Vladivostok, LCdr Tim Addison with two officers from the host ship seen in the background, the *Sovremennyy*-class destroyer *Boyevoy*. See the cover story starting on page 5.

► ***Canada is increasingly a maritime nation, becoming ever more dependent on the seas for its prosperity, security and standing in the world.***
► ***A developing maritime nation must take steps to protect and further its interests, both in home waters and with friends in distant waters.***
► ***Canada therefore needs a capable and effective Royal Canadian Navy.***

Metro Weather
Clouds, sun, thunderstorm.
High 29C.
Details, A19
Car lights on 8.33 p.m. and off 6.06 a.m. tomorrow.

THE TORONTO STAR

Established 1892

Monday
June 18, 1990
35 CENTS
(higher outside Metro Toronto and surrounding suburbs)
May/90 Monday-Friday paid circulation 533,547

METRO EDITION ★

Supplement on Liberals tomorrow

The climax to the Liberal leadership race is just days away. And The Star will keep you up-to-date as the delegates enter the final stretch.

Tomorrow's Star will contain a four-page supplement on the color, delegates, hoopla and political intrigue at the leadership convention that ends Saturday.

Manitoba chiefs agree to 'listen' to Ottawa

By Edison Stewart
TORONTO STAR

OTTAWA — Senior federal officials were to meet Manitoba Indian leaders today to try to end a stalemate over the Meech Lake accord in the province's legislature.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney said in a statement last night that he and Phil Fontaine, president of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, agreed that native representatives would hear federal proposals at a meeting today in Winnipeg.

Quebec a 'precious ally'/A10

The chiefs yesterday reiterated they were not interested in negotiating their opposition to the accord, but would "listen" to what Ottawa has to say.

"The Prime Minister and I spoke today," Fontaine said last night after a day-long meeting of the chiefs in Winnipeg.

Mulroney was "courteous" but no federal offers were on the table last night, he said.

All 61 Manitoba chiefs have been invited to Winnipeg in case they are needed for consultation on a federal offer, The Star's George Oake reports.

The accord, which expires if it's not ratified by all 10 provinces by Saturday, is now held up in the Manitoba legislature by a

Please see MANITOBA/page A10

Canadian navy finds warmth in Siberia

By Peter Goodspeed
TORONTO STAR

ABOARD HMCS HURON — The way Canada's sailors tell it, they knew the Cold War was over when a company of Soviet marines boarded this destroyer and ignored its sophisticated weaponry.

Instead, the Soviets started photocopying their faces.

"The photocopier really blew their minds," said Ordinary Seaman Geoff Adams of Halifax. "It was a major attraction.

"They were photocopying their money. They were photocopying their passports. They were photocopying their faces. Anything they could stick in there."

As an episode in naval history, the encounter was bizarre.

When the Canadian destroyer HMCS Huron and the destroyer/frigates HMCS Annapolis and HMCS Kootenay and their supply ship, HMCS Provider, sailed into the top-secret Soviet naval base of Vladivostok on June 3, they became the first Western warships to visit the Siberian port since 1937.

Communism renounced/A3

Headquarters of the Soviet Pacific Fleet, the largest battle fleet in the world, Vladivostok has been a closed city, off limits to almost everyone, including Soviet citizens.

No one was allowed near the port for decades, and residents of the city have even been restricted to the area, lest they take some of its secrets away with them.

But for four days this month, the Canadian navy shattered Vladivostok's isolation.

While the rest of the world was distracted by the Washington summit meeting between U.S. President George Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, Canada's Naval Pacific Group, from Esquimalt, B.C., sailed into Vladivostok on a friendship visit that dissolved five decades of animosity and distrust.

"We've never seen anything like it," Adams said, as he nursed a beer in the seamen's mess aboard Huron, after the Canadian task force tied up in Hong Kong this weekend for four days of shore leave.

"We didn't really know what to expect when we arrived," he said. "We were told that these people were still our enemies. We were told that when we went in, these people might treat us really cold. We sure didn't expect the reception we got."

Tens of thousands of Soviet citizens turned out to greet the Canadians as they sailed into port, said Leading Seaman Joe Wilson of Blind River, Ont.

"They lined the harbor for miles," he said. "They were waving Soviet and Canadian flags. They were shouting and screaming and waving

Please see WARSHIPS'/back page

2 Metro sisters face Jamaican drug charges

By Dale Brazao
TORONTO STAR

MONTEGO BAY, Jamaica — Two North York sisters have been arrested at the airport here and accused of carrying 3 kilograms (7 pounds) of hashish strapped to their thighs.

The sisters were identified as Elvira Gabriele, 22, and Elizabeth Gabriele, 19, of Wilson Ave.

Last night's arrests came as two Scarborough girls, aged 12 and 15, were to appear in Montego Bay court today to be sentenced for trying to smuggle 5.9 kilograms (13 pounds) of marijuana strapped to their bodies.

And Jamaican police said a 57-year-old Metro police officer was also arrested here three weeks ago trying to smuggle 0.2 kilograms (0.5 pounds) of marijuana back to Toronto.

Kids offered trips/A6

"He said he wasn't a dealer and that it was for his own personal use," said Corporal Texchus Nembhard of the Montego Bay police. "He was fined $1,000 and sent home."

Police here would not name the officer except to say he was from Scarborough.

The Canadian High Commissioner knows about the officer's arrest and it is up to him to release the name, Nembhard said.

The Gabriele sisters were arrested as they were ready to board a flight back to Toronto at 4 p.m. yesterday at Donald Sangster Airport.

Drug officers noticed bulges in their clothing and frisked the two women.

"One had 3 pounds of hash and the other was carrying 4 pounds," Constable Colin Taylor said.

The women, who had been in Jamaica three days, were to appear in court today at the same time as the two Scarborough girls were to be in Family Court for sentencing.

The girls pleaded guilty last week to possession of marijuana, dealing in marijuana and attempting to export marijuana.

Each charge carries a maximum penalty of $50,000 and a jail term but, given the girls' ages, they will probably be let off with a small fine and deportation to Canada, Nembhard said.

"We don't send kids to prison," he said.

The two youngsters have been in detention at the Melody Girls' Home since their arrest on June 8.

Police said the girls told them they were sent here by a Toronto drug dealer with strong connections to Jamaican drug dealers.

2 shot dead at rowdy bash in Mississauga

By Iain MacKinnon and Caroline Byrne
TORONTO STAR

Two men are dead after a shooting at a rowdy Mississauga house party.

One or more others are believed to have been injured in a fight early yesterday in the basement of a semi-detached home in the Wolfedale Rd. and Dundas St. W. area.

Delroy (Junior) Wolfe, 23, and Cardinal (Skip) Millwood, 35, both Mississauga residents, were pronounced dead on arrival at Mississauga General Hospital.

Weekend of death/A2

Peel Region police were called in at about 2.30 a.m. after shots were reported. The street was immediately cordoned off.

Neighbors said loud music was blaring from the house just after 2 a.m., when partygoers suddenly started screaming and running in all directions.

"One guy smashed his car into

Please see 2 KILLED/page A4

☐ **Photo/A2**

Mandela seeks Canada's help

FRED SHERWIN FOR THE TORONTO STAR

SALUTES FANS: Met in Ottawa yesterday by Brian Mulroney, Nelson Mandela acknowledges the cheers of hundreds of admirers by raising his fist.

Anti-apartheid leader has 'message of hope'

By Tim Harper
TORONTO STAR

OTTAWA — Nelson Mandela has arrived with heartfelt thanks for Canadians who worked for his release from prison.

And he is pleading with Canada to keep up the offensive against apartheid, the South African racial segregation system that "continues to ravage our country."

Mandela, deputy chief of the African National Congress, was given a tumultuous emotional welcome yesterday as he waved to a waiting crowd from the door of his Canadian Forces jet when it touched down from London, England, just before 4.20 p.m.

More than 1,000 people from both official and everyday Ottawa thronged to Uplands air base waving Canadian and ANC flags, singing freedom songs and holding clenched fists aloft in tribute.

Many reached out from behind security barriers to touch 71-year-old Mandela, who walked slowly but steadily to meet admirers. His gait showed none of the frailty some said had emerged during a gruelling six-week world tour. He spoke in strong, measured tones.

Mandela, dressed in a dark suit and tie despite a humid afternoon, was greeted on the red-carpeted tarmac by Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

Mandela's Metro visit/A6

"We bring to you a message of hope," Mandela said. "We now see a light at the end of the tunnel. We see the end of the road of a hard and costly struggle.

"We have come to tell you that beyond the horizon lies a future South Africa that will be as glorious as it is humane."

Although Mandela was to hold meetings with Mulroney and External Affairs Minister Joe Clark, he made it clear this visit was to be more a celebration of thanks for those who worked to free him after 27 years in prison.

He was to address Parliament today, with a message aimed at European Community countries that will soon consider whether economic sanctions against South Africa should be dismantled.

Then he was to travel on to Metro, where his visit was to take on more of a party atmosphere with a rally at Nathan Phillips

Please see MANDELA/page A11

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"I sometimes wonder why I ever bother."

Opinion split over free trade with Mexico

More Canadians oppose a free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico than favor it, according to a Gallup poll released today.

Opinion is roughly split, however, as 44 per cent oppose the idea and 39 per cent favor it. Seventeen per cent had no opinion.

Free trade has consistently been more popular in Quebec than in Ontario; and the new poll indicates that 53 per cent of Quebecers favor a three-way free trade deal, while only 27 per cent of Ontarians do.

The idea is supported by 42 per cent in Atlantic Canada, 43 per cent on the Prairies and 37 per cent in British Columbia.

Gallup chart/A11

A Gallup survey in March found that only 32 per cent favored the current Canada-U.S. free trade agreement, while 49 per cent were opposed. That pact has been in effect since Jan. 1, 1989.

Today's poll, based on interviews with 1,025 adults, was conducted May 2-5. Results are considered accurate within four percentage points, 19 times in 20.

U.S. President George Bush has pledged that a free trade agreement with Mexico will not undermine the Canada-U.S. trade pact.

"I can guarantee you that we're not going to do something that works to the detriment of an agreement that's just starting to function," Bush told Maclean's magazine in an interview to be published today.

In the magazine's *Portrait of Two Nations* report, Bush outlines his vision of a Canada-U.S.-Mexico continental trading bloc.

"I think it would be very well to show North America solidarity, if you will, by getting together or something of that nature, three countries," he said.

Prime Minister Brian Mulroney is "very interested" in the proposed arrangement, which would give all three countries "a standing that cannot be overlooked by anybody," Bush said.

Trade Minister John Crosbie last week said that Canada will decide within a few months whether to negotiate such a pact.

Warships' visit shatters decades of distrust

Continued from page A1

to us. There were banners all the way up the harbor saying 'Welcome' and 'Friendship' and "Long Live Soviet-Canadian Solidarity in the Pacific'."

"Everybody felt we were coming back from a war or something," Wilson added.

Bands played; Soviet sailors lined the decks of their own warships and saluted the Canadians and six little Russian girls, dressed in traditional peasant's costumes, presented the Canadians with flowers.

"It was mind-blowing," said Leading Seaman Sacha Menard of Quebec city.

"Everybody was so friendly, so warm. It made us feel that we were going to sail with them the next day. You thought: How can we go to war against these people."

Toasted with vodka

Residents of the port "wanted to know everything about you," Master Seaman André Lamontagne of Quebec city recalled.

"They wanted to know how much money you made. They wanted to know where we lived. They asked what our homes were like, how many rooms we had. Did we have a car?"

For four days, the Canadians had unlimited access to the Soviet city. They were invited into people's homes, treated to barbecues and toasted with tumblers of vodka.

When the Canadians opened their ships for public tours, they were swamped with visitors.

"I've never seen so many people who wanted to go on to a ship," said Wilson. "As soon as the gates would open, it would just be like a mad rush to the jetty. It looked like the start of the Boston Marathon."

More than 30,000 Soviets visited the vessels during the four days. Just as many were turned away. Even though the daily tours didn't start until 1 p.m., there were always several thousand people lined up waiting to go aboard by 8 a.m.

Canadian sailors became instant celebrities and were constantly asked to sign autographs.

"I was a tour guide on the first day and I got so tired writing my own name," said Adams.

"When they shoved papers at you, you'd see what some of the other guys had signed. There were lots of 'Brian Mulroney' and 'Wayne Gretzky' and 'Sylvester Stallone'."

The Canadians gave away more than 50,000 lapel pins, flags and decals.

"They gave us hats and badges," Menard said. "They would exchange anything. The one word everybody knew was 'Change?' 'Change?'," he said, tugging fiercely at his shirt sleeve.

Once, Canadian naval officers found a happy, drunken Soviet police officer staggering around one of the ships in his underwear. He had given away all his clothes.

When the Canadians were ashore, the Soviets buried them with good will.

"They did everything they could for us," Wilson said. "They took us into their homes. They'd buy everything for us. They wouldn't let us spend our own money."

When Soviet sailors came aboard the Canadian vessels, they were overwhelmed by what they regarded as a rich lifestyle.

Baffled by pop cans

"They didn't want to see our guns, they wanted to see our cabins," Lamontagne said. "They didn't really care about what sort of military stuff we had. They wanted to see how we lived."

When a group of Soviet marines was treated to some soft drinks in the Canadian sailors' mess, they were baffled by the zip-tab cans.

"They didn't know how to open a can of Coke," Adams said. "That's one of the things that really amazed me. We take it for granted, but they didn't have cans."

When the Canadians brought out their Sony Walkmans and compact disc players, the Soviets were green with envy.

"And the microwave! That was so great. They couldn't believe it," said Wilson. "We brought out the microwave and made some popcorn for them and they thought it was the greatest gift they had ever been given."

The Canadians found most of Vladivostok's stores almost empty. There were long lineups and shortages of most basic items.

"There were hardly any fresh vegetables," Wilson said. "We'd give them an apple on the ship and they'd just go crazy. And orange juice! They couldn't believe it. They had never tried it in their lives.

"We showed them what a 'screwdriver' was, mixing vodka and orange juice, and they just loved it."

When it came time to leave, thousands of Soviets turned out to wave goodbye to the Canadians, and again the bands played.

"But it was quieter," Wilson said. "It was sad. Quite a few people had tears in their eyes."

Menard added: "One thing we didn't like is that as soon as we got out of there, we were told (for security reasons) we couldn't contact any of them (the Soviets) any more.

"It's history now."

Before he left, however, Menard picked up one souvenir, a tapestry decorated with a picture of a globe and a Soviet hammer and sickle.

The words "They want communism all over the world" are embroidered in Russian script underneath the picture.

"I guess it's kind of old," Menard said. "It's probably an antique now."

Skydivers 'thwarted' by copter rides

NIAGARA FALLS, N.Y. (AP) — A Canadian firm that gives helicopter rides over Niagara Falls refused to stop flying for four minutes to allow U.S. Army skydivers to land nearby, an officer says.

The army's Golden Knights precision parachute team wanted to have a promotional picture taken of members dropping above the falls.

"It was all set up," Maj. Robin Pfeil, a U.S. Air Force reserve officer, said yesterday.

Two helicopter companies agreed to stay out of the airspace but Niagara Helicopters of Niagara Falls, Ont., didn't, the major said. The Golden Knights called off the jump.

Kathy Booth, an official for Niagara Helicopters, denied her company was uncooperative.

She said her firm told the army: "We would not be in their way."